

**Marked Up Version of Amended Claims**

**Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii)**

1. (Twice Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising
  - conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer [in the nucleic acid amplification reaction],
    - wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides,
      - wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.
21. (Amended) The method of claim [20] 1 wherein all of the primers used in the nucleic acid amplification reaction are template-deficient.
23. (Twice Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising
  - conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer [in the nucleic acid amplification reaction],
    - wherein the nucleic acid amplification reaction does not involve thermal cycling.
77. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising
  - conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer [in the nucleic acid amplification reaction],
    - wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides, wherein the [two] one or more adjacent template-deficient nucleotides are within three nucleotides of the 5' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide,
      - wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to

allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.

78. (Amended) The method of claim 77, wherein the [modified] template-deficient nucleotides are abasic nucleotides.

79. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer [in the nucleic acid amplification reaction],

wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides, wherein the [modified] template-deficient nucleotides are abasic nucleotides,

wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.

80. (Amended) A method of reducing formation of artifacts in a nucleic acid amplification reaction, the method comprising

conducting a nucleic acid amplification reaction using a template-deficient oligonucleotide as a primer [in the nucleic acid amplification reaction],

wherein the template-deficient oligonucleotide comprises one or more template-deficient nucleotides, wherein the [two] one or more adjacent template-deficient nucleotides are within three nucleotides of the 5' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide, wherein the [modified] template-deficient nucleotides are abasic nucleotides,

wherein the number and composition of template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end of the template-deficient oligonucleotide is sufficient to allow the template-capable nucleotides 3' of the template-deficient nucleotide closest to the 3' end alone to effectively prime nucleic acid synthesis in the nucleic acid amplification reaction.